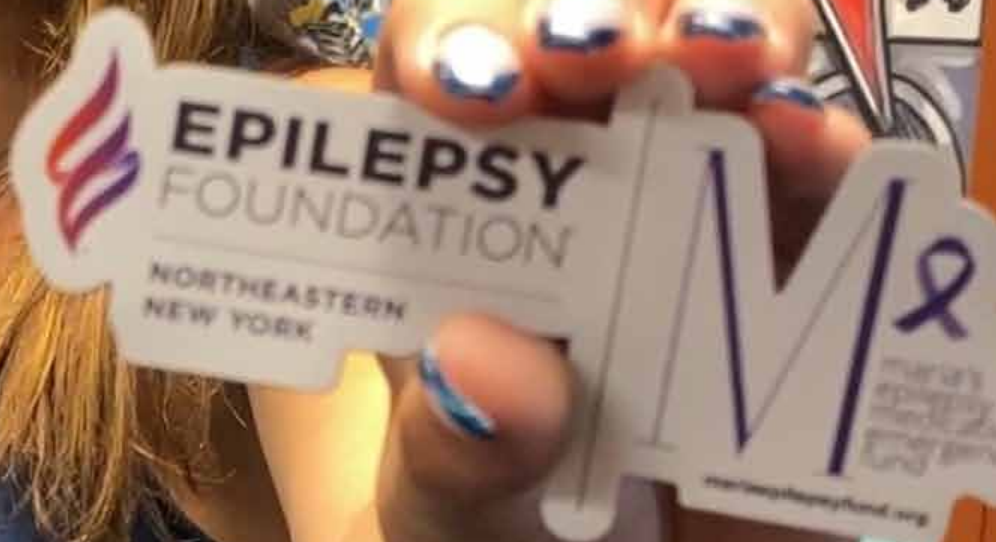


Make-A-Wish®
NORTHEAST NEW YORK

Wishmaker

VOL 30 ISSUE 2 / FALL/WINTER 2021



My Wish to Help Others

By Maria Lutz

Page 4

With our gratitude

To Our Valued Donors and Volunteers,

We continue to be blessed by so many wonderful donors and corporate partners who have generously given their time and financial support these past six months to help us grant some truly outstanding wishes for local kids with critical illnesses. For example, you will read in this issue how many of our premier community fundraisers came back in full force this past summer to support our wish granting program, including Wack's Ride, Wish Jump, the Kingsway Community Golf Classic and the Tech Valley Charity Golf Tournament. We are deeply grateful to the organizers and supporters of all those community events for their renewed enthusiastic support.



Lisa M. Clifford
Board Chair

We were also honored to be able to create hope for local children and teens battling critical illnesses by granting their amazing wishes. In addition to Jaxon's treehouse wish, Karson's gaming computer wish and Melanie's playhouse wish, we granted our fifth-ever "I Want to Give Back" wish for 18-year-old Maria. What a wonderful young woman Maria is: Her wish story, also featured in these pages, is about creating a fund to help others with epilepsy afford their costly medications.

Our Board of Trustees continues to provide valued leadership to the chapter, especially now as we work to complete our new three-year strategic plan. We honor Michael Lasch, managing partner at Pine Street Capital Partners in Albany, and Kristen Berdar, CPA, CMA, partner at BST & Co. CPAs. in Albany, as they depart the Board after 12 years of service. We also welcome RJ Long, managing partner at Coldwell Banker Prime Properties, and Jonathan deForest, president of BBL Construction Services, LLC, to the Board of Trustees. Both RJ and Jonathan have supported our chapter generously through their corporate engagement, and we are proud to have their valued leadership as Trustees going forward.

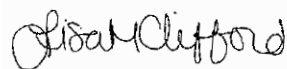


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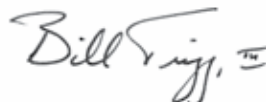
We are also proud to share with you the stories of wishes granted in the past six months and the ways we are engaging our donors and the community to partner with us **in granting the wish of every eligible child** in our chapter. Our wish families join us in thanking you for your support and engagement as donors and volunteers, especially during our Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign throughout November and December. We wish you and your families a safe and relaxing holiday season!

Thank you for being partners with us to make life-transforming wishes come true for local children with critical illnesses! Please remain safe and well.

Best wishes always,



Lisa M. Clifford
Board Chair



William C. Trigg, III, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer



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3 Washington Square
Albany, NY 12205
518.456.9474 (WISH)
Fax 518.782.0618
neny@neny.wish.org
wish.org/neny

ON THE COVER: Wish teen Maria Lutz chose to give back for her wish. See page 4.

Serving children in the 15 counties of the 518 and 838 area codes since 1987

Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schoenectady, Schoharie, Warren and Washington counties in Upstate New York.

In Their Own Words ...



My Wish to Help others

By Maria Lutz

I'll never forget the day that changed my life forever. I felt an extreme sense of emptiness. From that day forward, I lost a sense of control that I am still working to regain.

On April 10, 2016, I learned I had epilepsy. I was just 12 years old.

Epilepsy has changed my life in so many different ways: dozens of hospital visits, doctor appointments, 911 calls and more. This disorder does not define who I am, but it has shaped who I am.

It changed me into a person who wants to help others just like me. I care a lot, especially for people who suffer from this awful disorder. I wish I could take away the pain of anyone who lives with this. I can't.

But I can do something to help, thanks to a late-night idea, and Make-A-Wish.

No Answers, Then One Option

At a very young age, I started experiencing minor seizures. We went to my pediatrician multiple times, receiving no answers. It became something that we swept under the rug and began to ignore. In seventh grade, I began suffering extreme generalized tonic-clonic seizures. They became progressively dangerous, which led to my epilepsy diagnosis.

I was put on multiple medications, but they were not a permanent solution. After many late-night visits to the emergency room, I was recommended to Boston Children's Hospital. They ran multiple tests and attempted a surgery, but it was just too dangerous. I was then referred to a very experienced team of doctors at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. We thought it would be a stretch, but it was our only option.

In September 2019, we traveled to Minnesota. A prestigious team of doctors met with me and my parents to say they could perform a surgery that had a high chance of success. They would place a device called a Responsive NeuroStimulator (RNS) that stimulates my abnormal brain waves. This was my only option for a shot to be seizure-free.

On Dec. 3, 2019, Dr. Kai Miller, a well-known surgeon, performed a successful eight-hour surgery. Every three months I pay a visit to Mayo Clinic to adjust the simulations, and I am still on medication.



But I am definitely on the right path to a solution.

A Wish, and an Idea

As a young woman with epilepsy, I qualified for a Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish. Over the years, I have had many different ideas for my wish but never made a final decision. A few months ago, I met with a team that works for Make-A-Wish. We brainstormed for more ideas. Nothing really felt right. Until ...

One night I was lying in bed thinking, *If I could wish for anything in this world, it would be to help others.* When I was first diagnosed, without medication I was having constant seizures. From those days forward, I could never imagine what it would be like if I couldn't afford the cost of seizure medication. I decided I wanted to use this Make-A-Wish opportunity to make a change and help people just like me.

My wish is to create a dedicated fund within the Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern New York that will help people with epilepsy pay for their medication. The No. 1 reason for skipping doses is cost. I want to help

others and possibly even change their life with this fund.

The Maria's Epilepsy Medication Emergency Fund (**mariaepilepsyfund.org**) will help raise awareness and money for people who are struggling to afford seizure medication. If I had to choose one thing to fix in this world, it would be a cure for epilepsy.

One day, I learned my life had changed. But one day, hopefully soon, I can change the life of others.

Maria Lutz, 17, is a Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid from Inlet, Hamilton County. A 2021 graduate of Town of Webb High School, she is attending SUNY Oswego, majoring in journalism and minoring in creative writing. See the video of her wish on the Our Stories page at wish.org/neny.

For more information or to donate, go to **MARIAEPILEPSYFUND.ORG**



New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc.
"Keeping New York Safe"

An Enduring Holiday Tradition Returns

The 29th annual Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign, Make-A-Wish Northeast New York's longest-running fundraiser throughout the 15 counties we serve, kicks off this month, featuring many of its familiar elements and a new Presenting Sponsor: NYSCOPBA.

Scan and Donate



This year, stars featuring wish kid ambassadors — six from the Greater Capital Region and two from the North Country — will be sold for a single suggested donation amount of \$5 per star.

This vitally important fundraising campaign runs through the holidays. For the fourth year, it will include a Day of Wishes Telethon in partnership with CBS6 Albany and B95.5. Despite the pandemic, the 2020 telethon shattered expectations and records, raising more funds for wishes for children with critical illnesses than the first two years combined! The telethon will be held at Colonie Center on **Thursday, Dec. 2.**

"The Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign, unique among Make-A-Wish chapters, is an enduring fundraiser that serves as a testament to the generosity of the community we serve," Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, said.

Stars will be available at Crossgates Mall, Colonie Center, Wilton Mall, Aviation Mall, Champlain Centre and various businesses and schools throughout the region. You will also be able to donate directly to the campaign via adoptawishneny.org.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

This campaign is made possible by the hundreds of volunteers throughout the chapter who generously donate their time to staff our booths. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Director of Development Kirsten Broschinsky at kbros@neny.wish.org or 518-456-9474.

THE AMBASSADORS FEATURED ON THIS YEAR'S STARS

Isabella, who faces physical and developmental challenges, saw her life profoundly impacted by her sensory room wish.

"Isabella lights up every time she goes into the sensory room," wish mom Cristina said. "She still doesn't smile much. She has a lot of pain and discomfort. But she loves it."

The room features assorted apparatus, including a padded floor and harness and track system, which gives Isabella newfound mobility.

"It has various pieces of equipment that help her experience things that maybe a typical child might be able to experience, like trying to walk and crawl," Cristina said.

The wish mom said the room has impacted the quality of life of the entire family.

"The sensory room makes Isabella so happy," Cristina said, "which has been making our lives so much better."



Isabella, 3, Gansevoort

I wish to have sensory equipment



Portia, 5, Broadalbin

I wish to go to Walt Disney World® Resort

For **Portia**, a visit to Walt Disney World® Resort meant so much more than just a chance to meet some of her favorite princesses, such as Belle.

"It gave her a break," wish mom Jessica said. "It gave her a chance to be a child again, and to have fun."

Portia's treatments dominated not only her life, but the entire family's time. Going to Disney provided a much-needed opportunity to re-unite.

"We spent a lot of time in the hospital, so it was nice to bond as a family again," Jessica said. "She got to spend quality time with her siblings. We have been going in so many different directions."

The wish mom said the impact of wishes on children is powerful and lasting.

"It just gave us hope," Jessica said. "The way she just lit up when we brought her into Disney. There is nothing that compares to that."

Wish mom Shantae struggled with how she would swing getting a new bedroom set for her growing daughter, **Makaila**. The mom got her wish — and so did Makaila.

Makaila's shopping spree wish included that new bedroom set, and so much more. "My favorite part is my bed because it's cozy," Makaila said, pointing out she loves her "Frozen" bedspread. "My wish made me happy."

Mom, too: "She is able to sleep better. She got to upgrade to a big-girl bed."

There was more, including a visit to The Disney Store and other shops.

"My wish [included] a Reborn [Baby] and Disney toys," Makaila said. "My wish made me excited."

And the wish made Shantae relieved.

"She was so overwhelmed and so excited," the wish mom said. "Financially ... we would not have been able to get the things she wished for. It lifted the weight off my shoulders."



Makaila, 7, Troy

I wish to go on a shopping spree



Jaxon, 8, Schenectady

I wish to have a treehouse

Read all about Jaxon's wish on page 10.

For **Gabe**, getting a swimming pool for a wish worked out for him and his family in all sorts of ways.

"I really enjoy swimming, because the summer was really hot this year – and I especially [enjoy] swimming with my family," he said.

"It helped us bond more, because we were usually separated in our rooms. But now we play together a lot more."

A pool also proved therapeutic to the teen.

"It helped comfort me and made me feel better," Gabe said. "When I am in the water, I don't feel as sick when I get off of chemo."

In talking about his wish, and those whose contributions made it possible, Gabe kept returning to one word: *Grateful*.

"I was really grateful," he said. "A lot of kids are worried about what is happening to them, and [a wish] makes them feel better."

Andrew has a favorite part of his wish, a new custom gaming computer.

"I am able to actually play more games now than I could play on a console," he said.

But the gaming setup means more than just being able to play League of Legends, Fortnite and Call of Duty®: War Zone. When he is in his computer chair, in front of his monitor, thoughts of his health woes melt away.

"The best part is when I'm playing games, I don't have issues," the 14-year-old said.

Andrew thanks those who donate to Make-A-Wish – "They are very generous" – and offers encouragement to wish kids waiting on wishes.

"It will come eventually," he said. "It's very worth it."



Gabe, 13, Altamont

I wish to have a swimming pool



Andrew, 14, Queensbury

I wish to have a custom gaming computer



Brandon, 10, Plattsburgh

I wish to have a playset



Del, 11, Saranac

I wish to go to EA Games Headquarters

At Make-A-Wish, there is a saying: Don't wait for hope – create it. Which brings us to **Brandon's** wish.

Brandon's wish for a backyard playset was initially pushed back by a hospitalization and other factors. The 10-year-old and his family wanted the wish granted as soon as possible, which it was.

Just as winter loomed. In Plattsburgh, no less. And it was still perfect.

"It was exciting," wish mom Heidi said "He was looking out the window as they were setting it up. He just ran over and started playing. Oh, yeah, it was cold."

Mom did make Brandon put on his coat and hat first.

Brandon loves the swings, slide, walking on the playset's bridge and having picnics on its table.

"He got to play with it all summer," the wish mom said. "It was just one of those things he really likes. He still uses it a lot."

Wishes can be almost anything, bound more often than not solely by a child's imagination. But, again, more often than not, families talk about a precious gift that comes with a wish: *Time*.

Time to be together as a family. To bond. To put worries about an illness aside.

Wish mom Sarah said when her daughter **Del** had to go to treatments or be rushed to the hospital, that meant a 90-minute one-way trip from their Saranac farm, on top of any hospital stay. "Time got sucked away from us," she said.

But Del's wish to visit the EA Games headquarters, which publishes her favorite simulation video game The Sims outside of San Francisco, got some of that family time back.

Del visited EA Games, where she learned the how they construct the simulation game. (They even made her into a character.) But there was even more to the wish, which included trips to the Oakland Zoo, Fisherman's Wharf, Alcatraz, a candy factory and more.

"It was Cloud Nine for her," wish mom Sarah said. "It was a week of no stress."

"It was a 'Yes-yes-yes' week," the wish mom said. "It felt like an intense family time week in a good way. We had lost so much time."

"It gave back time that was lost."

Sarah said she still marvels at the fact that a wish covers every logistical detail for a family, taking the stress out of travel.

"Everything was taken care — even things I couldn't imagine needing," she said. "It is magical."



Karson Gamed At The Ballpark

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Karson traveled down from the North Country for an overnight stay in the Capital Region, under the impression the trip was primarily a school shopping expedition.

The next day, he was told the family would also stop by the chapter's Walk For Wishes at Joseph L. Bruno Stadium in Troy, where Karson would say a few words about his pending gaming computer wish.

"I always really liked gaming," Karson, 10, told host Chad O'Hara of B95.5 FM and the crowd. "It makes me not think about what I've been through. It takes my mind off of it."

O'Hara said Karson's computer wish obviously could not be granted at the ballpark, but surprised the delighted Jay youth with his computer chair. Then O'Hara directed attention to the ballpark videoboard.

With growing shock, Karson watched a video of workers installing a gaming computer system – his gaming computer system – in his home.



"This is your wish, and your wish has been granted," wish granter Joel Steele said in the video. (Jessica Herzog and Kathy Steele also served as wish granters.) "It will be waiting for you when you get home. Congratulations, Karson!"

As Karson realized what he was seeing, his jaw dropped and his eyes grew wide before he whipped his head toward his mom.

"It's amazing!" he later said.

The next day, wish mom Holly said that Karson's excitement only grew when he got home.

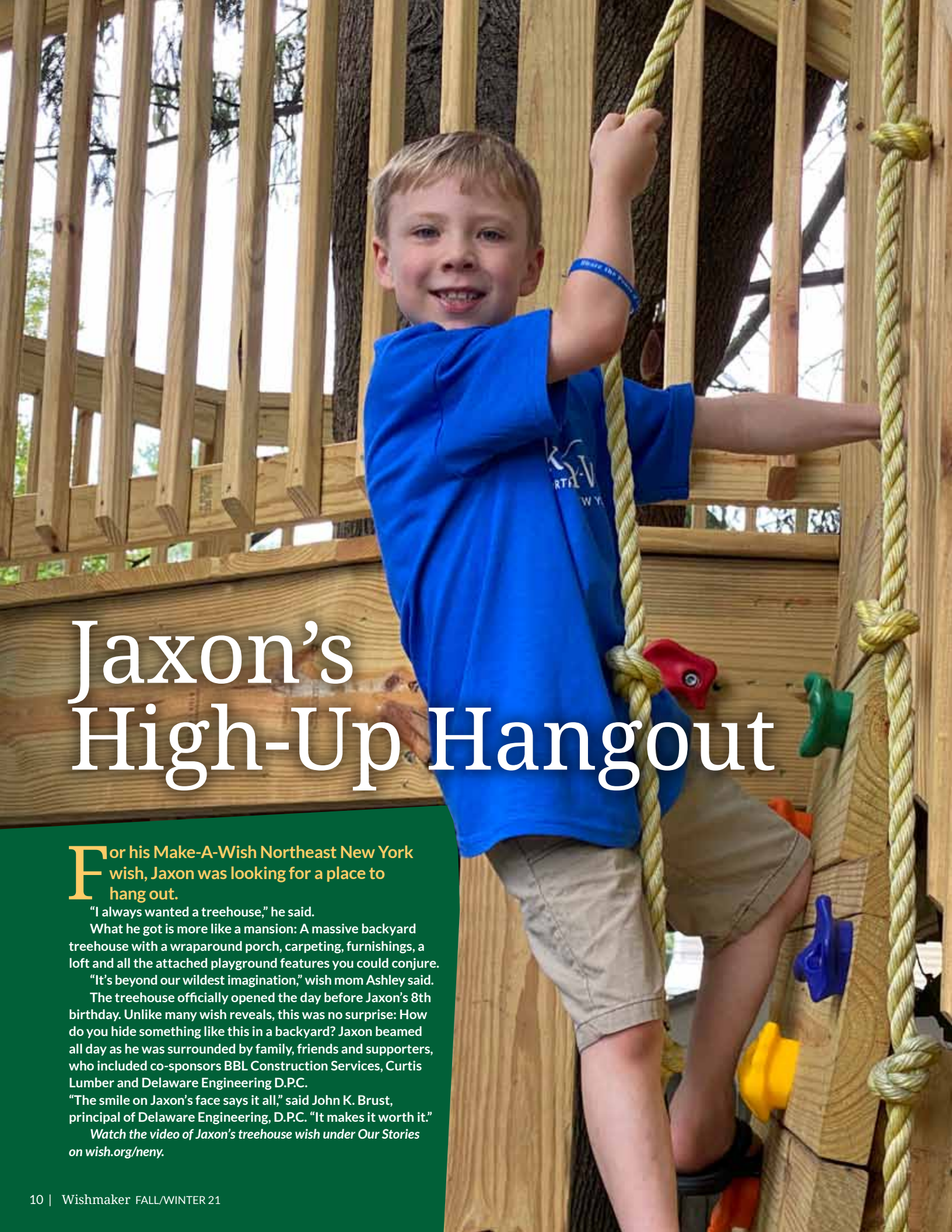
"Karson absolutely LOVES his computer wish," she said. "He doesn't want to leave his room!"

Weeks later, Karson remain thrilled. "I use it every day," he said. "When I saw it on the big screen I couldn't wait to get home!"

The entire family has been energized by Karson's wish experience.

"Everything was absolutely amazing," the wish mom said. "Thank you all so very much."

Banner Industries sponsored this amazing wish. Special thanks also go out to Best Buy, Apex Entertainment, Holiday Inn Express and the Tri-City ValleyCats for making Karson's wish so memorable.



Jaxon's High-Up Hangout

For his Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish, Jaxon was looking for a place to hang out.

"I always wanted a treehouse," he said.

What he got is more like a mansion: A massive backyard treehouse with a wraparound porch, carpeting, furnishings, a loft and all the attached playground features you could conjure.

"It's beyond our wildest imagination," wish mom Ashley said.

The treehouse officially opened the day before Jaxon's 8th birthday. Unlike many wish reveals, this was no surprise: How do you hide something like this in a backyard? Jaxon beamed all day as he was surrounded by family, friends and supporters, who included co-sponsors BBL Construction Services, Curtis Lumber and Delaware Engineering D.P.C.

"The smile on Jaxon's face says it all," said John K. Brust, principal of Delaware Engineering, D.P.C. "It makes it worth it."

Watch the video of Jaxon's treehouse wish under *Our Stories* on wish.org/neny.



Make-A-Wish Northeast New York would like to thank the co-sponsors of Jaxon's wish for making this incredible treehouse a reality!



Revealing *Hope*

Melanie walked out the front door with her parents, around the side of their house and followed as dad opened the tall wooden gate to their backyard.



“Ahhhhh,” the 5-year-old exclaimed as she saw her Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish for the first time: A massive pink playhouse.

This was not just any playhouse. It met her specifications, down to the twinkling lights, kitchen accessories, slide and loft. And, of course, it had to be pink.

“Her whole bedroom is pink – every inch of it except for the carpet,” wish mom Ashley said. “She got the [pink] playhouse idea, and she was all over it.”

Melanie immediately went inside and began exploring all the kitchen accessories. “You can pretend,” she said. The reveal came as she was undergoing treatment for leukemia.

“It’s a good day for her. She doesn’t always have a lot of them,” the wish mom said. “It’s something exciting for her to look forward to and be happy about.”

“She is a strong little girl. She is still in the house every day with a smile on her face.”

Except this day. Melanie was in her own house – but still had a smile on her face.

“She is going to be in it every day,” wish mom Ashley said.

Melissa Holly, Trisha Bobowski and Kaleena Castiglione served as the wish granters.

Wishes Granted

'I wish to HAVE'

I Wish to Have a Gaming Computer

Andrew, 14, from Queensbury

Wish Granters: Nancy Blair and Charlene Hewlett

Wish sponsored by Wack's Ride

Karson, 10, from Jay

Wish Granters: Jessica Herzog, Joel Steele and Kathy Steele

Wish sponsored by Banner Industries

I Wish to Have Life-Enhancing Medical Equipment

Alexander, 15, from Burke

Wish Granters: Kismet McCormick and Scott Liloia

Wish sponsored by Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign

Trevor, 4, from Valley Falls

Wish Granters: Karen Kaufman-Wachs and Janielle Krawczyk

Wish sponsored by Austin's All-Stars

I Wish to Have an Above-Ground Swimming Pool

Harper, 6, from South Glens Falls

Wish Granters: Tim Riley and Kathy Riley

Wish sponsored by Green Mountain Electrical Supply

I Wish to Have a Pink Playhouse

Melanie, 5, from Fultonville

Wish Granters: Kaleena Castiglione, Trisha Bobowski and Melissa Hally

Wish sponsored by Kyle and Danielle Kinowski

I Wish to Have a Hot Tub

Timothy, 18, from Summit

Wish Granters: Joleen Bruyette and James Cole

Wish sponsored by David and Danielle Druzynski and 2021 Fund-A-Wish Donors

I Wish to Have a Treehouse

Jaxon, 8, from Schenectady

Wish Granters: Pete Cowie, Toni Cowie, Mike Smith and Kelly Stang

Wish sponsored by Curtis Lumber, Delaware Engineering, D.P.C., and BBL Construction Services

I Wish to Have a Shopping Spree

Meera, 4, from Watertown

Wish Granters: Karen Dominguez

Wish sponsored by Jamie and Lauren Dodge

I Wish to Have a Playhouse

Colton, 12, from Hoosick Falls

Wish Granters: Jenny O'Connor and Justice White

Wish sponsored by Capital Cup for Kids



'I wish to GO'

I Wish to Go to the Zoo

Billy, 16, from Schenectady

Wish Granters: Jim Bettini and David Perritano

Wish sponsored by Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign

'I wish to GIVE BACK'

I Wish to Give Back by Creating a Fund for Individuals/Families to Assist with the Cost of Their Epilepsy Medication

Maria, 17, from Inlet

Wish Granters: Karen Kaufman-Wachs and Sandi Worona

Wish sponsored by Rev. James Kane

These wish granters also participated on wishes that cannot be publicized: Rachel Bahor, Jim Bettini, Michael Doyle, Linda Doyle, Heidi Eustis, Christopher Fain, Laura Mazzara, Erin Oliver, Lauren Schlenker, Abby Todd and Bill Trigg

NOTE: Due to the coronavirus pandemic, fewer wishes than normal have been granted this period.

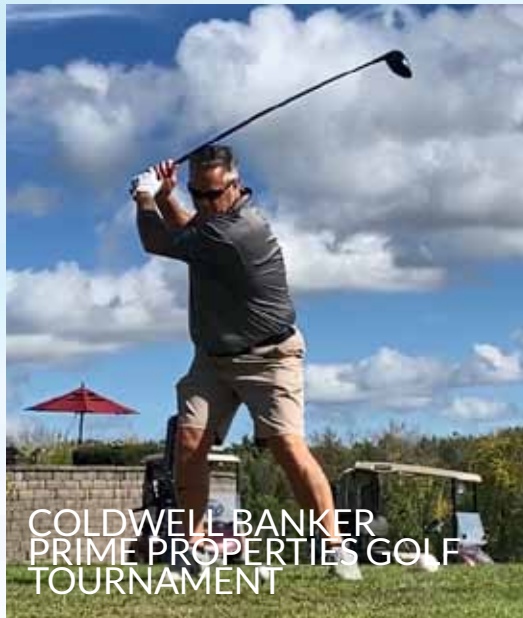
COMMUNITY EV

Return in Force

These past months have served as a family reunion of sorts.

After more than a year in which community events normally held to benefit Make-A-Wish Northeast were either canceled or relegated to a virtual format, fundraisers returned to the golf courses, parks, streets and even the skies to benefit the chapter and our wish kids and families.

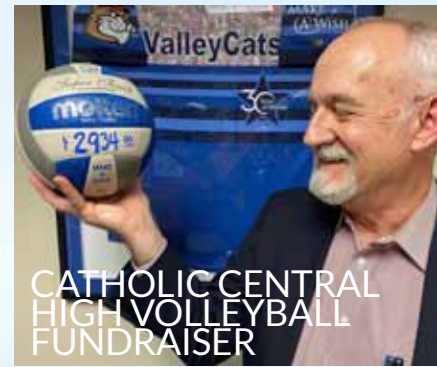
We are grateful to all the organizers, sponsors, volunteers and supporters who made these events a success. Here are scenes from some of the fundraisers held to support our mission. Thank you, all.



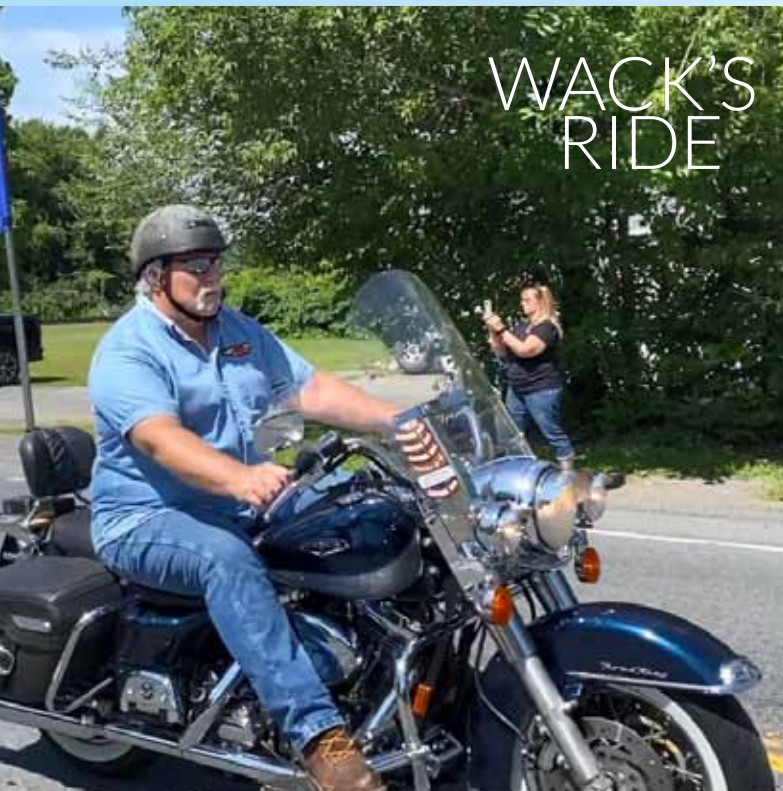
EVENTS



WISH
JUMP



CATHOLIC CENTRAL
HIGH VOLLEYBALL
FUNDRAISER



WACK'S
RIDE



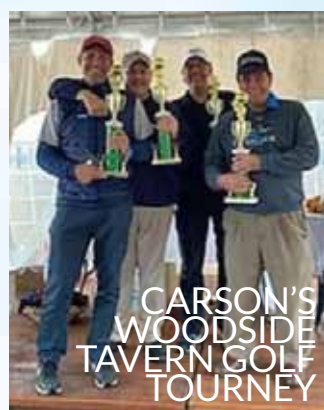
PLAY IT FOREWARD
GOLF TOURNAMENT



NAKED TURTLE
GOLF TOURNAMENT



WISH
FEST



CARSON'S
WOODSIDE
TAVERN GOLF
TOURNEY



KINGSWAY
COMMUNITY
GOLF TOURNAMENT



Tech Valley Tees Off Again For Wishes

After a year sidelined due to the pandemic, the Tech Valley Charity Golf Tournament teed off again to benefit Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, raising \$119,000 for the chapter!

Held at the prestigious Saratoga National Golf Club, the 12th annual installment featured 168 golfers, raffles, a ball drop, prizes and some fine golf. Wish kid Logan served as a featured speaker, and Chad O'Hara from B95.5 FM emceed.

The tournament has grown into a staple community event for Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, notable for the commitment and enthusiasm organizers, sponsors and participants exhibit for the tourney and Make-A-Wish mission.

"Everyone looks forward to it," Chris Walton said.

Walton is the director of the tournament and a member of the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Board of Trustees. He has been involved with the Tech Valley tourney since its inception.

"Make-A-Wish is a great organization, and it's always great to give back to the community," he said. "We try hard to make sure everyone wants to come back and generously participate."

And Make-A-Wish and its wish kids and



families are thankful for each and every person involved.

"We are incredibly grateful for the continued generous and remarkable commitment the organizers of this tournament have exhibited toward our mission of creating life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses," Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, said. "All the participants contribute to giving our wish kids a wish experience that truly and genuinely changes their lives, helping them to be more and do more with their lives."

Special thanks go out to all the sponsors, including Presenting Sponsor **Banner Industries** and Wish Sponsors **Banner Industries, Gross Electric, Inc., JE Dunn, Swagelok, World Wide Professional Solutions, FPI Mechanical, Inc., and PCI.**



Make-A-Wish
WISH HEROES

You Can Be a Hero!

Twice a year, we host Wish Hero campaigns that celebrate the incredible men, women, children and organizations who have joined forces to be the light for children fighting critical illnesses. Together, Wish Heroes raise funds from their networks by reaching out and asking for meaningful donations.

Being a Wish Hero is more than just fundraising, though. Wish Heroes share their personal stories and supportive messages to introduce more people to the transformational power of a wish and the positive impacts on the child, family, and community.

If you would like to participate as a Wish Hero, please contact Director of Development Kirsten Broschinsky at kbros@neny.wish.org or by calling 518-456-9474.



H★PE

SHINES BRIGHTLY

2021 VIRTUAL *gala*

Hope Did Indeed Shine Brightly

For the second year in a row, our annual Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Gala migrated from the Hall of Springs in Saratoga Springs to the internet.

While we could not gather in our finest attire, the *Hope Shines Brightly* Virtual Gala in June did exactly what it always sets out to do: Raise the needed funds for life-changing wishes, and create hope for children with critical illnesses.

The Gala raised nearly \$150,000 for the mission. **You** did that. Thank you.

Tiffany Rowe, a professional life coach who is very much attuned to the Make-A-Wish mission, headlined the evening. Not only is she a former Make-A-Wish® America Board member, but she is also a wish alum. And what a wish: In 1988, the then-15-year-old met and was later called on stage to dance in concert with Michael Jackson! No surprise she is Chair of the National Board Alumni Association.

Also featured were three Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kids: Jack and his therapy dog wish, Bear; wish alum

Cameron, who spoke eloquently on the impact of his wish four years ago, and Melanie and her wish reveal, during which she received a backyard pink playhouse (see page 12).

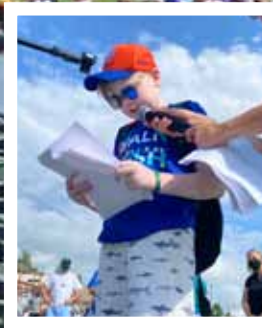
The chapter's first virtual Gala was held in June 2020, relatively early in the pandemic, amid much uncertainty. This year's event came as the nation began to initially emerge from the throes of COVID-19, just prior to the chapter resuming live events.

SAVE THE DATE:
Saturday, March 26.
We are already looking forward to gathering together in person for our 2022 Wish Gala!



TAKING A WALK TOGETHER AGAIN

After a year of walking apart and wishing together, the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York community once again gathered as one at Joseph L. Bruno Stadium in Troy for the chapter's annual Walk For Wishes, raising nearly \$102,000 for wishes for local children with critical illnesses.



This year's event featured 384 participants who walked with us near and far! Many walked from neighborhoods and parks, while many joined us at The Joe, masked and ready! The opening ceremony included moving testimonials from wish mom Crystal Aleschus, wish kid Riley, wish granter Diane Duquette-Burl, corporate partner CAP COM Cares Foundation representative Paige Rueckert and our very own CEO, Bill Trigg. The biggest highlight, though, was the emotional wish reveal for wish kid Karson (see page 9).

A wonderful surprise came when we were able to announce that Team Austin's All-Stars, captained by wish aunt Kassie Cleary and wish mom Crystal Aleschus, had raised more than \$12,000 – enough that they will now be able

to sponsor a wish for a local child and pay it forward in memory of their very special wish kid, Austin. Congratulations to them on their hard work and dedication. We are honored to be a part of Austin's legacy!

We'd once again like to thank Presenting Sponsor Upstate Chevy Dealers and all our sponsors, as well as our media partner Albany Broadcasting Company and our host, the Tri-City ValleyCats, for making the Walk such a success!

Top Fundraisers

Team Week Winner
Vuitton Squad

Top Individual
Evan Franz \$6,151

Top Team
Austin's All-Stars \$13,650

Top Company
MetzWood Insurance \$6,720



Thank You, Sponsors!

A special thank you to all our Walk sponsors who made this year's event possible, including: our *Presenting Sponsor* – Upstate Chevy Dealers; *Joy Sponsor* – MetzWood Insurance; *Strength Sponsors* – The Property Shop, CAP COM FCU/CAP COM Cares Foundation, Adirondack Beverages, and BST & Co., LLP; *Hope Sponsor* – MetLife, and our *Star Sponsors* – Alpin Haus, Moffat Group, Manning & Napier, and Where Smiles Grow Pediatric Dentistry. Also, special thanks go out to the Tri-City ValleyCats, ShopRite, Hixny and Albany Broadcasting Co.!

Space to Grow Into

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Colton poses in front of his wish: a new backyard playhouse.

But this playhouse is like few others, customized just to the 12-year-old's liking, from the unique colors outside to the elevated height to accommodate a loft and ladder inside. There is also an electrical column, a rear-wall work counter and much more — examples why this playhouse really works!



Volunteers Appreciated

We LOVE our Make-A-Wish Northeast New York volunteers, and after long last finally got to show it again in person at an appreciation event at The Saratoga Winery.

We honored award winners for 2021 and 2020, including Wish Champion award winners Joleen Bruyette (2021), left, and Linda Doyle (2020), right, pictured with CEO Bill Trigg.

We also lauded those who passed service milestones and all who give of their time to help create life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses. Special thanks to Madison VanDenburg, who headlined Wish Fest, for coming out to play for us!



A Picnic at the Park

Wish mom Meghan Spring, accompanied by wish kid Jack and sibling Peyton, throws out the first pitch at an August Tri-City ValleyCats game at Joseph L. Bruno Stadium.

That night the chapter hosted its annual Wish Family Picnic, where we got to reunite

with wish alums as well as wish kids and families waiting on their wishes. As always, thank you to the ValleyCats for being such a great partner!

The Gift of Time

One of the many things we are grateful for when it comes to our wish granters is their generosity of time. This is not just the time they devote to wish kids and families, but the time they put in to ensure they can serve these families well.

Recently, wish granters underwent virtual continuing education hosted by the chapter, with topics ranging from communications to the Workshop of Wishes to how they can contribute in other ways to the chapter. We remain humbled by the dedication and commitment of these volunteers to our mission.



The Eyes Say It All



You can see the joy in Meera's eyes shine through on her recent shopping spree wish.

Billy's Wild Wish!

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Billy enjoyed his wish, a pair of animal experiences in the Syracuse area! Special thanks to Rosamond Gifford Zoo, The Wild Animal Park, Dinosaur BBQ and our friends at Make-A-Wish Central New York for making Billy's wish come true!



First Comes a Referral

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Eddie enjoys his wish: A brand new hot tub! Eddie's wish did not begin with his joyous wish reveal day, but rather with a referral.

Do you know of a child like Eddie who may be eligible for a wish? To learn more or make a referral, visit wish.org/refer-a-child, or contact Manager of Medical Referral Outreach Abby Connor at 518-456-9474 or aconnor@neny.wish.org.

A Life-Enhancing Wish

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Trevor and his family enjoy his wish reveal, during which he received life-enhancing medical equipment!



Chapter Welcomes New Board Members

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York welcomes RJ Long and Jonathan deForest to its Board of Trustees. Both were elected to three-year terms.



RJ Long is managing partner of Real Properties Group and its Coldwell Banker franchises. Long leads the 10th largest Coldwell Banker franchise in the country and the 103rd largest real estate brokerage in the United States.

Long leads a team of leaders, being responsible for overseeing the executive staff who handle day-to-day operations.

Since rising to this role in 2015, Long has led the firm to growth by increasing its footprint from 14 offices to 24 and increasing its gross revenue by approximately 60 percent. Long also manages several other ventures and has created several startups. These ventures' focuses have ranged from investment properties to intellectual property holdings.

After growing up in the Albany area, Long relocated to Boston and graduated from Bentley University with a degree in Finance and Management. He attained an MBA from McCallum Graduate School in 2008, and most recently completed a degree in Commercial Real Estate Analysis and Investment at MIT in 2019.

Long also sits on the board of Central New York Information Systems in Syracuse, and previously Global MLS, Inc., in Albany. He has been appointed to the New York State Legislative Affairs Committee by the New York State Association of Realtors. He has chosen to play an active role in changing the real estate industry by advocating for the rights of consumers and realtors alike in an ever-changing world. In addition to Make-A-Wish, he is a devoted supporter of the American Cancer Society.

Long lives with his wife and two children in Loudonville.



Jonathan deForest is President of BBL Construction Services, LLC. He leads corporate strategic initiatives and plays a strong role in business development. During his 33-year tenure with the organization, deForest has served in numerous positions and has led the team to successfully deliver multiple types of construction projects across a wide variety of markets.

deForest holds a degree in Construction Technology from SUNY Delhi's Construction Management program. After graduating Magna Cum Laude from SUNY Delhi, he began his career with BBL the following day. He is a member of the Associated General Contractors of America, the Construction Management Association of America, the Green Building Contractors of New York State, and the U.S. Green Building Council.

Throughout the years, his passion for construction and customer service has never waned. deForest leads the BBL Team in the same tradition as his predecessors, promoting hard work, cooperation, integrity and client satisfaction.

An avid sportsman, deForest enjoys spending his free time outdoors both at home and in his travels. He is an active member of his church and greatly enjoys traveling to discover new destinations.

A lifelong resident of the Capital Region, deForest lives in Duanesburg with his wife.

Lasch, Berdar Depart

The chapter recognizes and applauds **Michael P. Lasch** and **Kristen D. Berdar** for their long service to Make-A-Wish Northeast New York as they depart the Board of Trustees.

"As we are sad to see our two most experienced Trustees depart, we smile in appreciation for all they have done in the service of wish kids and their families," said William C. Trigg, III, CEO of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York. "Their impact will be felt for years to come."

Michael P. Lasch has served on the Board of Trustees since 2008. He served as Board Chair from 2014-15, and had two stints as Board Treasurer: 2011-13 and 2017-19.

A founder and managing partner of

Pine Street Capital Partners, Lasch is actively involved in all of the firm's activities, including deal sourcing, deal structuring and portfolio management. He serves as a board observer on Pine Street portfolio companies Mercantile Adjustment Bureau, Power Tech, Adaptec Solutions, CinchSeal Associates, Hull & Associates and Lumina Vision Partners, and is a board member on Pine Street portfolio company Rite Air Mechanical Services. He also serves as a board member and past president of the Upstate Venture Association of New York.

Kristen D. Berdar served as a Trustee from 2005-08, and again from 2014-21. She served two stints as Board Treasurer, from 2006-08 and again from 2014-17.

A partner with BST & Co. CPAs., Berdar



has more than 25 years of experience in public accounting. Her focus is in the Outsourced CFO, Controllershship & Accounting department, where she specializes in the Virtual Accounting Solutions Division. VAS provides companies and not-for-profits with outsourced accounting and Modern CFO solutions. Berdar is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Certified Management Accountant (CMA) with a background in tax.



Weibrecht Heading Back Up The Mountain(s) For Wishes

As you would expect of a legendary skier, it's time for three-time Olympian Andrew Weibrecht to head back up the mountain.

Make that mountains. And it's how he's doing it — and how he is coming down — that makes it special.

Last season, Weibrecht embarked on a wholly unique fundraiser: He is not just scaling all 46 of the Adirondack High Peaks, but skiing down them. Here's the thing: Not all of those peaks are designed for skiing. Then again, if anyone can do it, it's this two-time Olympic medalist.

All this to raise funds to benefit the wish kids and families of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York.

The member of the Make-A-Wish Board of Trustees knocked out 21 High Peaks last season and hopes to complete the rest this season. Weibrecht has already raised more than \$11,000 toward the \$15,000 fundraising goal he seems destined to surpass.

"I've always loved the opportunity to work with Make-A-Wish, and since becoming a Board member I know firsthand the impact the fundraising dollars have," he said. "Skiing in the

Adirondack backcountry is a favorite pastime of mine, so naturally I was excited to figure out a way to merge those two passions.

"As soon as the snow flies this winter, I plan to be back on the trails. If you're interested in following along, check out my fundraising page (<http://site.wish.org/goto/Ski46>) or Instagram (@andrew_weibrecht)."

When Weibrecht launched Ski For Wishes in 2019 at Whiteface Mountain, he envisioned an annual end-of-season fundraiser for the chapter that involved him skiing with donors.

The first year's event proved to be a promising foundation. But the 2020 Ski For Wishes had to be canceled at the last moment in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic. The same went for the slated third annual installment last March. (There will be no public 2022 event.)

So began this solo Ski For Wishes.

"No matter the circumstances, every child deserves a childhood," Weibrecht says on his page. "Life-changing wishes wouldn't happen without the power of generous donors like you. Your support gives children much-needed hope for brighter days ahead."

Sometimes the skiing is good, sometimes sketchy along the narrow trails made for hiking. And that one time his binding broke and he had to go miles downhill on one ski? That kind of slalom skiing is not fun.

"I've been hiking and spending time in the Adirondacks since I was a little kid and have a deep understanding of how raw and wild these mountains can be," Weibrecht said. "Being out so often this past winter not only heightened my respect for this landscape, but brought my resolve to see this challenge through to a whole new level. Broken equipment, aborted summits and freezing temperatures seem like a nominal entry fee to help support a cause like Make-A-Wish."

Weibrecht thanks Head and Stio, as well as his family's business, the Mirror Lake Inn, as founding supporters of this effort. Weibrecht won his Olympic silver medal on Head skis, and has been an ambassador for Stio, an authentic outdoor brand based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, for the past two years. In addition, his newest fundraising supporters include Alpin Haus, CDPHP and NBT Bank.

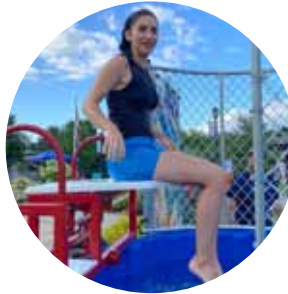


Five Questions with ... Alyssa Caroprese

Alyssa Caroprese, the morning meteorologist for WRGB Ch. 6, began her association with Make-A-Wish Northeast New York in 2018. Since then, she has literally and figuratively jumped into her volunteer role.

Caroprese hosts the chapter's annual Day of Wishes Telethon, associated with the Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign. She also serves as co-emcee of the campaign's yearly Capital Region kickoff. Over the years, the meteorologist has expanded her ties to Make-A-Wish, from serving as a celebrity dunker in a Wish Fest dunk tank to gleefully jumping out of a plane at 13,500 feet at Wish Jump.

She recently answered five questions for *Wishmaker*:



What did you know about Make-A-Wish before you got involved, and what have you learned?

I always knew Make-A-Wish's mission was to help kids with critical illnesses, but since being involved I've learned it's much more than just a wish. Children have shown noticeable differences with their health after their wish is granted in some cases. They are joining a community where they make friends and continue to support the Foundation for years to come for incoming wish kids.

What is your favorite Make-A-Wish memory since becoming involved with the organization?

The hustle every year during the telethon, trying to raise as much money as possible. This telethon is a production, and there are so many hands on deck to keep it moving fluidly. The best part is definitely the end of the night, seeing the total and clapping in awe at another successful Day of Wishes.

How has your involvement impacted you?

There is no greater feeling than helping out your community and knowing you are putting a smile on a kid's face and making

a difference in an individual's life. It helps me feel whole!

When someone asks you to tell them about Make-A-Wish, what is the first thing you say?

All of the money stays local! I think this is a big selling point that makes people want to donate. Second is always how awesome the staff at our local chapter is! Soo much fun to work with!

Which is scarier: Jumping out of an airplane, or falling into a dunk tank filled with ice water?

Skydiving, no question!



Former Intern Richards Joins Staff

Margaret Richards, a former intern and volunteer with Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, has joined the chapter's staff as administrative coordinator.

In her role, the Kinderhook native supports the chapter's internal operations, as well as fulfills other duties as assigned.

"During my internship I learned just how powerful a wish can be," Richards said. "I truly appreciate the opportunity to be part of Make-A-Wish and its life-changing mission."

Richards served as a Development intern for Make-A-Wish Northeast New York in the fall of 2020, and as a volunteer this past spring. In May, she graduated from the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business at Utah State University, where she was a Presidential Scholar and honors student. Richards was part of the Huntsman Scholar Program at the university, and received a prestigious scholarship awarded to top business students based on academic performance, leadership qualities, service engagement and commitment to the university's principles.

"Margaret distinguished herself during her internship," said William C. Trigg, III, CEO of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York. "She brings great value to our team going forward."



Connor Ready to Report for Duty



Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Connor met with officers from the Schenectady Police Department at Jumpin' Jack's Drive-In to discuss his wish, slated for next spring, to be a police officer.

It got better: Not only did the officers give the 13-year-old a rundown of the inner workings of a squad car — and a ride, of course — but they surprised the

teen with department gear, including a uniform(!), that he will need for his big day.

In addition to the large turnout by Schenectady P.D., the Scotia Police Department, family and wish granters Rob and Theresa Roemer were on hand to create a very special evening for Connor ahead of his wish. (Rob Roemer is also Vice Chair of our Board of Trustees.) Thank you, all!



You Can Spark Hope

Isolation and uncertainty can harm a child's emotional well-being. They may become so depressed and anxious that they begin losing the joy of childhood.

Children who are fighting critical illnesses experience extreme emotional challenges every day. For a young mind to wrap itself around medical terms, harsh treatments and scary surgeries is not only exhausting – it is *traumatic*. Such mental distress can impair a child's long-term healing and leave them feeling hopeless.

A spark of hope can change everything.

With hope, a child with a critical illness finds light in the darkness of their current circumstances. It transforms their perspective, replacing feelings of trauma with hope for tomorrow. Their spirit is rejuvenated, and they have renewed motivation to persevere — and envision a brighter future.

This hope can only be found in a wish ... and you have the power to create it.

When you help grant a wish, you restore hope for a child and improve their mental well-being. A wish is a turning point in a child's medical journey that opens the door to exciting possibilities. You empower them to reclaim their childhood, and experience transformative joy.

Because of a community of supporters, the unknown feels less scary for a child and their family. They are given new ways to cope that improve their quality of life. In fact, a wish *forever* renews emotional strength, restoring hope for a lifetime.

A wish begins with hope – and hope begins with you.

Restore hope with a wish. Start today: wish.org/neny.

Make-A-Wish
NORTHEAST NEW YORK



Local Funds, Local Wishes

We thank these individuals, groups and organizations for their fundraisers on behalf of our wish program.



Community Fundraisers	Amount Raised
Tech Valley Charity Golf Tournament	\$118,997
Wish Fest	\$50,727
Kingsway Community Golf Tournament	\$43,064
Wish Jump	\$41,545
Wack's Ride	\$37,353
Naked Turtle Golf Tournament	\$12,010
Coldwell Banker Prime Properties Golf Tournament	\$11,500
Robert Lee Walsh American Legion Post 337 Golf Tournament	\$10,000
Carson's Woodside Tavern Golf Tournament	\$5,411
New York Spyder Riders' 2021 SpyderQuest	\$4,026
North Country Flying Tigers Model Airplane Club - Family Fun Day	\$2,000
Adirondack Shelby Mustang Club	\$1,269
Apex Entertainment and Causeplay Heroes	\$200

Make your donation go further, with less effort!

A monthly donation means your generosity can be spread out over time to fit your budget.

Your sustaining donations help ensure wishes are granted as soon as we can make them happen!

Even a gift of \$5 per month can make a difference in the life of a child battling a critical illness. That's \$60 that could be used for lunch on a wish trip, a video game during a shopping spree, or pool floats for a swimming pool wish!

Sign up online by visiting wish.org/neny and click "Donate," then select "Monthly Gift." Your donation becomes automatic, and you'll be eligible to receive exclusive benefits!

For questions, call 518-456-9474 or email neny@neny.wish.org.



Kids for Wish Kids	Amount Raised
Catholic Central High School Volleyball	\$2,934

ShopRite Does Right for Wish Kids

A spring fundraiser at the six ShopRite supermarkets in our chapter raised \$13,800 for Make-A-Wish Northeast New York — more than enough to fund an entire wish!

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO Bill Trigg (third from left) and Director of Development Kirsten Broschinsky (second from right) joined ShopRite staff at the Niskayuna ShopRite to accept the check. Niskayuna was the top-performing local store in the fundraiser: Kudos to store director Sean Doyle, and cashiers Sandy and Pamela, who each personally raised more than \$1,000!

Next time you're in ShopRite, be sure to say "Thank You" on behalf of all wish kids and families!



Be a Champion of Hope



At Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, we have debuted our new business partnership program, the Corporate Champions of Hope.

Over the past year, we've seen our community step up in ways big and small to help us continue granting wishes, even during a pandemic. The Corporate Champions of Hope program recognizes that your level of support and engagement is unique to you — just as each wish is unique to each child.

As a Corporate Champion of Hope, your commitment throughout the year will help make every wish come true, giving children with critical illnesses experiences of hope and joy when they need it most. You will also join a select group of philanthropic businesses who help us innovate rapidly to grant wishes in new ways now and into the future.

Throughout the year, Make-A-Wish Northeast New York promotes activities that engage, educate and inspire our communities. As a Champion of Hope, your support can be a mixture of event sponsorship, Adopt-A-Wish support and unrestricted giving that enables the chapter to continue its outreach and make sure we reach every eligible child in our region. Our goal for you is to find the right giving and engagement level for your business and your employees. The levels of support and the associated benefits are just the beginning of a conversation that ensures your experience is meaningful and your impact is transformational.

Regardless of how you support Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, you are partnering with one of the most trusted non-profit brands in the nation, one trusted to be wise stewards of your philanthropic support. In fact, on average, 75 cents of every dollar donated is directly spent on wish granting.

Together, we can continue to be a light of hope for today — and tomorrow.

To begin the conversation about becoming a Corporate Champion of Hope, please reach out to Director of Development Kirsten Broschinsky at kbros@neny.wish.org.

Upstone Joins Make-A-Wish Mission at Full Speed

Our community partners are an essential part of our ability to grant the wish of every eligible child. Without local businesses, that mission would not be possible. Every now and then a



new partnership comes along, jumps in the deep end with no hesitation and brings the whole company along.

Last year, Upstone Materials reached out to us to get involved in the 2020 Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign. They wanted to sell stars at their local offices, most of which sit north of Lake Placid. But their support didn't end there. Upstone Materials decided that for every dollar the employees gave, they would match it. At the end of their fundraising campaign, they raised almost \$8,000 in total from the employees and the match.

HR Manager Danielle Godin and Area Manager Doug Henry came to our North Country kickoff at Champlain Centre in 2020 and presented Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, with a check. Upstone employees participated in our Virtual Gala opening video, and have become proud supporters of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York and our mission. This year, they are repeating those Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign fundraising efforts and hoping to break last year's record.



"It helped all our employees come together," Upstone Materials Administrative Assistant Steffaney Jabaut said. "We sent out an email every day with a different wish story, and we made it a point to talk about it in our daily morning briefings.

"The success of last year's campaign directly impacted our desire to do this again. Our employees were so invested, they were asking me in August if we were doing it again."

Companies such as Upstone Materials are pillars in their community, and we are proud to have them as a supporter of our Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign.



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Wish Alums: Be Our Ambassadors

When a child becomes a wish kid, they and their family become lifetime members of the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York community. Long after a wish is granted, many wish kids and families remain active in Make-A-Wish, including being involved in events, and acting as our ambassadors and advocates throughout the year.

When wish alumni represent the chapter and the Make-A-Wish mission, they “pay it forward,” helping to ensure that future wish kids also realize their true heartfelt wish while battling a critical illness.

Whether as an ambassador at one of our signature chapter events — our annual Gala, Walk For Wishes or Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign — hosting their own fundraiser, advocating for the Make-A-Wish mission at any number of community events, or appearing on posters or even in the media, wish alumni serve as the embodiment of hope for all the wish kids and families who follow.



Would you be interested in becoming a wish ambassador? If so, contact Development Manager Jen Cullen at jcullen@neny.wish.org or 518-456-9474. We would love to hear from you again!

GIVE GIFTS WITH PURPOSE



Freshen up your winter wardrobe at the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Wish Store! Get yourself some high-quality, low-cost, limited edition Make-A-Wish Northeast New York swag, with proceeds going toward supporting local wishes! These items also make for perfect thoughtful holiday gifts.

You can do good, look good and give well at the same time. Just go to wickedsmartapparel.com/collections/make-a-wish